

Remarks at the Inaugural Ceremony of the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles, California

June 8, 2022

The President. Good evening. Please be seated. Welcome to Los Angeles. And I probably should stop right here because I've followed some difficult acts in the past——

Audience member. No fossil fuels! No! No fossil fuels!

The President. [Laughter] I've followed some difficult acts, but never before have I followed such a difficult act as I've seen the last 45 minutes up here.

It's my honor to host my fellow leaders from throughout the—our hemisphere for the ninth Summit of the Americas at a moment when we need more cooperation, common purpose, and transformative ideas that have never been a greater need than today.

I also want to welcome all the representatives from civil society, the private sector, international institutions, and especially young people from across the Americas who are participating in this summit.

Democracy is a hallmark of our region. Our Inter-American Democratic Charter, which grew out of the third Summit of the Americas, captures our unique commitment to democracy as a region. It affirms the right of people throughout the Americas to democracy and our obligation as governments to promote and defend democracy.

As we meet again today, in a moment when democracy is under assault around the world, let us unite again and renew our conviction that democracy is not only the defining feature of American histories, but the essential ingredient to Americas' futures.

Folks, to state the obvious, our region is large and diverse. We don't always agree on everything, but because we're democracies, we work through our disagreements with mutual respect and dialogue.

At this summit, we have an opportunity for us to come together around some bold ideas, ambitious actions, and to demonstrate to our people the incredible power of democracies to deliver concrete benefits and make life better for everyone. Everyone.

And no longer is this a question of what will we do, what will the United States do for the Americas. The question is what we can accomplish by working together as true partners with diverse capabilities, but equal and mutual respect, recognizing both our individual sovereignty and our shared responsibilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit our region particularly hard. While we account for just 12 percent of the global population, we experienced more than 40 percent of reported global pandemic-related deaths. It's an enormous tragedy that has left too many families grief stricken.

An ensuing economic crisis, triggered by the pandemic, ravaged economies throughout the hemisphere, wiping out much of the hard-earned progress we had made. Twenty-two million more people fell into poverty in just the first year of the pandemic. Inequity continues to rise. Global inflammatory [inflationary]* pressures were made worse by Putin's brutal and unprovoked war against Ukraine—and making it harder for families to make ends meet.

* White House correction.

And all of these factors are contributing to vastly increased migration flows throughout our hemisphere, with too many people feeling there is no option available to them to provide for themselves and their families.

These challenges affect all of us. All of our nations have a responsibility to step up and ease the pressure people are feeling today. In the months leading up to this summit, countries have made meaningful and concrete commitments to address these challenges. And the United States is attempting to do our part as well.

Yesterday we launched our Cities Forward initiative, recognizing the key roles of mayors and local governments—the role they play in delivering for the people where they live. And we'll host the inaugural Cities Summit of the Americas in Denver in 2023.

Earlier today we announced a new America [Americas]* Health Corps, with 50,000 [500,000]* public health and medical professionals being trained in the region over the next 5 years to help strengthen our health systems throughout the hemisphere.

In the next few days, we'll be rolling out another new initiative created in cooperation with many of your countries. It includes the U.S.-Caribbean Partnership To Address the Climate Crisis, which the Vice President Harris will lead for our country, and a collaboration among the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, and Mexico—the hemisphere's largest exporters of food—to increase food production for export, as well as increase fertilizer production for transportation—and transportation.

Our leaders, all of us, as we discuss ways to better target more than a half a billion dollars of—the United States is devoting to increasing security for our citizens, working with partners to disrupt transnational criminal organizations, go after drug traffickers and illicit firearms, advancing anticorruption efforts, and strengthening the rule of law.

And tonight I'm announcing a new economic partnership that builds on all the work we have done with the region and will guide our engagement going forward. We're calling it Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity, and it's grounded on the same core values that my administration is bringing to our own strong economic recovery and to bolster long-term economic competitiveness in the United States.

First, the American [Americas]* Partnership will help economies grow from the bottom up and the middle out, not the top down. What's true in the United States is true in every country: Trickle-down economics does not work.

But when we invest in strengthening workers and the middle class, the poor have a ladder up, and those at the top do just fine. That's how we can increase opportunity and decrease persistent inequity.

We need to break the cycle where marginalized communities are hit the hardest by disasters and have the fewest resources to recover from crises and prepare for the next one.

Together, we have to invest in making sure our trade is sustainable and responsible and creating supply chains that are more resilient, more secure, and more sustainable. By working with close friends who share our values, we can make sure that we are not left vulnerable to unexpected shocks while generating economic opportunity for the people in our region.

Second, the Americas Partnership will foster innovation and help governments to deliver for their own people. People everywhere expect their government to help give them just a little bit of breathing room, provide opportunities for work that pays a decent wage, educate children so they can rise as high as their talents can take them, make communities more secure so families feel

* White House correction.

safe in their homes and individuals know their rights will be respected. That means directing investment to help governments deliver on those responsibilities, including modernize—modernizing multilateral development banks to better address the challenges of today and of the future.

For example, many countries in our region have prospered—have profited over—prospered overall, making it harder for them to secure development lending. But they struggle with deep inequity. I'm proposing a fundamental reforms to the Inter-American Development Bank Group. And the United States is ready to put our new capital in the bank's private sector lending arm—the IDB investment—to help capitalize [catalyze]* in the critical flow of private capital into the region, especially to those startup, digital connectivity, renewable energy, and health.

Third, the American [Americas]* Partnership will tackle the climate crisis head on, with the same mentality we're bringing to the work in the United States.

When I hear "climate," I think jobs: good-paying, high-quality jobs that will help speed our transition to a green economy of the future and unleash sustainable growth; jobs in developing and deploying clean energy; jobs in decarbonizing the economy; jobs in protecting biodiversity of our hemisphere; jobs that provide dignity of being able to feed your family, give your children a better life, and envision a future of possibilities.

That's what this is all about: responding to basic human desires that we share for dignity, for safety, and for security. And when those basics are absent in one place, that's when people make the desperate decision to seek them elsewhere.

So, on Friday, we'll also come together to launch the Los Angeles Declaration, a groundbreaking, integrated new approach to managing migration and sharing responsibility across the hemisphere. The declaration represents a mutual commitment to invest in regional solutions that enhance stability, increase opportunities for safe and orderly migration through the region, and crack down on criminal and human trafficking who prey on desperate people.

Safe and orderly migration is good for all of our economies, including the United States. It can be a catalyst for sustainable growth. But all unlawful migration is not acceptable. And we will enforce our borders, including through innovative, coordinated action with our regional partners.

We've come a long way together since the United States hosted the first Summit of the Americas 28 years ago. But the "Spirit of Miami," as it was known—the sense of hope and new possibilities that defined that first summit—remains key to facing the challenge of today and unlocking the incredible potential that exists in this hemisphere, in the Americas.

There is no reason why the Western Hemisphere shouldn't be secure, prosperous, and democratic, from Canada's northernmost reaches to the southern tips of Chile.

We have all the tools we need right here in our own hemisphere. Our people are dynamic and innovative. Our nations are committed to working in partnership. And our region is forever knit together by the close bonds of family and enduring friendship.

We see it here in Los Angeles, as you heard earlier, a city that has been shaped from its earliest days and strengthened over the decades by the rich and diverse contributions from people of all our nations. It's written in the murals, the markets, the thoroughfares that crisscross the city, bearing witness to the history, struggle, and indomitable spirit of the people of the Americas. This city is testament to the connections that bind us and our capacity to achieve great things together.

* White House correction.

So tonight let's enjoy a wonderful celebration. Let us leave here renewed with purpose and a renewed partnership. And tomorrow let's get to work building the future this region deserves.

Thank you all. And again, welcome, welcome, welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. at the Microsoft Theater. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles, CA :: Inaugural ceremony.

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Names: Harris, Kamala D.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich.

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